EMPOWERING MENTAL HEALTH CONSUMERS USING MOBILE APPLICATIONS

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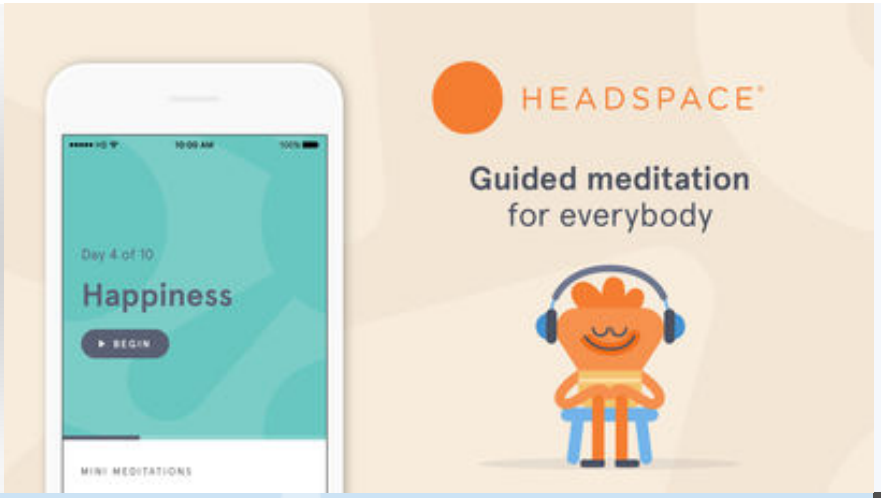
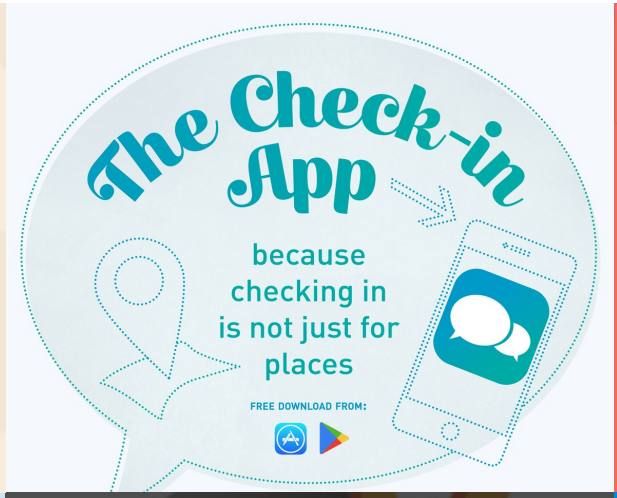
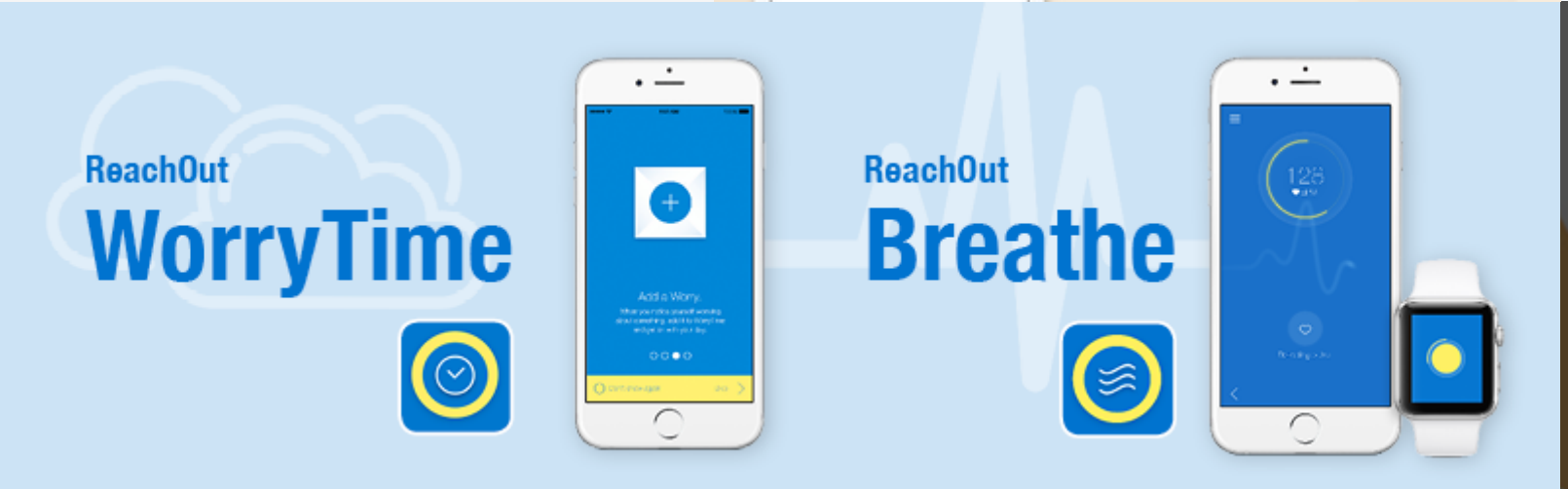
WHAT ARE MENTAL HEALTH APPS?

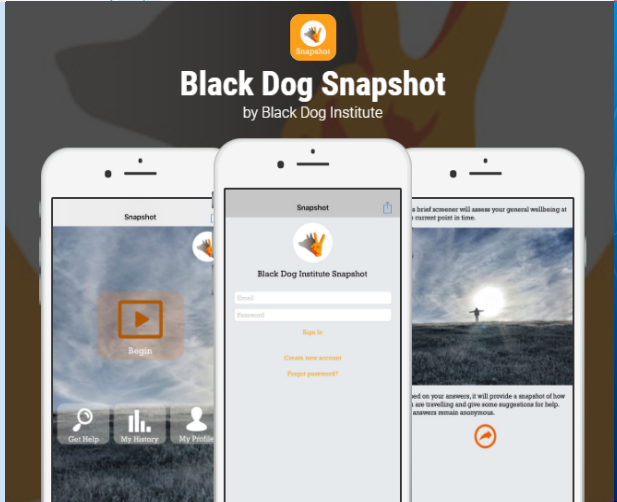
- App = Application
- Mobile apps are software applications downloaded by users to one or more mobile devices (University of Oxford, 2019), and, are usually used on smart phones/tablets
- Mental health apps are intended to enhance healthcare for patients and for the community
- Most apps are Android, Apple, and Microsoft products

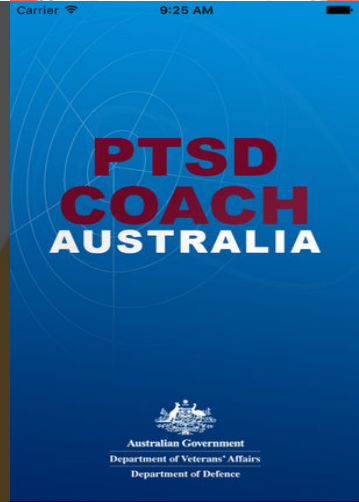
COMMERCIAL MENTAL HEALTH APPS











THE CURRENT STATE OF MENTAL HEALTH APPS

- >10,000 mental health–related smartphone apps (Torous & Roberts, 2017)
- But, most commercial apps have not been clinically evaluated and are not evidence-based. Approx. 700 mindfulness apps (only 4% provided acceptable training/education) (Mani, Kavanagh, & Hides, et al., 2015)
- The efficacy of apps has been evaluated for schizophrenia (Ben-Zeev, Brenner, & Begale, 2014), depression (Mohr, Tomasino, & Lattie, 2017), anxiety disorders (Tighe, Shand, & Ridani, et al., 2017), and suicidal ideation (Firth, Torous, & Nicholas, et al, 2017)

BENEFITS OF MOBILE APPS FOR MENTAL HEALTH

- Apps may circumvent the barriers associated with seeking mental health treatment through more traditional venues related to finances and stigma
- 24-hour access to one's phone
- Mostly free/inexpensive
- Real-time support to individuals in chosen settings
- Personalized interventions… (Livingston, et al., 2019)

CLINICALLY EFFECTIVE MENTAL HEALTH APPS

- Livingston, et al. (2019) systematically reviewed the academic literature (identified in PubMed) and the online mobile app stores (Google Play and iTunes) for self-help smartphone applications for adults with anxiety, PTSD, alcohol misuse, and depression – 1 January 2008– 3 September 2017

- Apps = psycho-education, self-monitoring, cognitive therapy, relaxation and breathing

- Out of the four apps evaluated by other researchers, only PTSD Coach was commercially available

- The effectiveness of the following apps (treatment vs control group) included:
  - **A-CHESS** ↓ drinking days (CBT, psycho-education, high risk location alerts, relaxation, social support, AA meeting locations and podcasts (Glass et al., 2017; cited in Livingston, et al., 2019)
  - **Anxiety Help** ↓ anxiety (exercise book and audio mindfulness exercises (Ivanova et al., 2016, cited in Livingston, et al., 2019)
  - **PTSD Coach – Therapist Version** ↓ PTSD symptoms (CBT, psycho-education, symptom monitoring, coping skills and links to social and professional support)
  - **PTSD Coach – Guided Version** ↓ PTSD symptoms (Possemato, et al., 2015, cited in Livingston, et al., 2019)

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